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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 266. SEPTEMBER, 1929.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God"—Romans 8 : 14.

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Editorial.

Sir John Campbell.

There will be deep and widespread regret at the death of Sir John Campbell, M.A., M.D. F.R.C.S. Eng., LL.D., which occurred on Saturday morning, 31st Aug. at his residence "Culloden," Craigavad.

This sad event means a great loss to British Medical Science, to Scholarship and Citizenship in Ulster, and to the Liberal Religious Faith of the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland.

To the nation generally and to the Ulster public in particular, Sir John rendered invaluable service during his long and brilliant professional career. Of his public work in connection with local hospitals and infirmaries it is impossible to speak too highly. Sufficient to say that many poor people have reason to bless his name and to thank God that he was always willing to lay his great medical skill on the altar of public service. It was often in his power to "heal the sick and relieve the poor" and right nobly did he practice this Christian precept. The Samaritan Hospital in particular owes much to him. For many years he was senior surgeon in this institution and was largely responsible for placing the hospital on its present strong financial and administrative foundation.

Interest in Education.

Sir John also made his mark in the realm of education. In addition to articles in medical journals and text books devoted to specialised medical subjects he made many contributions to the cause of education outside his own professional sphere. For many years he took a prominent part in discussions on Irish University Education and many educational reforms owe much to his influence. He was President of the Royal University Graduates' Association, an elected member of the Senate of the Royal University, Chairman of Convocation of Queen's University, Belfast, and a clinical lecturer and examiner of the same University. Sir John also made his mark in government administrative circles. When the Northern Parliament was formed in 1921 he was elected as one of the four Unionist members for Queen's University and sat in the house up till the dissolution in 1929. The long overdue knighthood was conferred in 1925. It had been earned several times over, particularly during the European War when he rendered valuable service as chief surgeon of No. 5 British Red Cross Hospital in France.

Interest in Liberal Christianity.

As citizens of Ulster we are indebted to Sir John Campbell but as members of the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland we are doubly indebted to him. It is quite probable that but for his devotion to our cause there would be no united Church but merely a group of scattered congregations with no central organisation to hold them together. Sir John not only laid the foundation, but was the chief workman of the superstructure of the Non-Subscribing Church.

It is quite certain that but for his wisdom and foresight, the Sustentation Fund which now amounts to nearly £20,000 and upon which so many of our ministers and congregations depend, would not have been brought into existence or at least would not have been in the healthy state we find it to-day. In 1905, in an address to the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, he pleaded strongly for the formation of a strong united Irish Non-Subscribing Church with an adequate Sustentation Fund.

For the next five years he pleaded and worked and in 1910 the various groups of Non-Subscribers united into one Church. At the same time a sustentation fund was started and chiefly owing to Sir John's efforts, grew rapidly. In this way he worked in God's service as his father had done before him, but with this difference. Whereas the father ministered for over a generation chiefly to the congregation in Templepatrick, the son ministered for over a generation to all the Non-Subscribing congregations in Ireland, rendering them a service it is impossible to over estimate.

" We are the Heirs."

Much more space and time would be needed to record other services rendered to our Church by this Christian gentleman. Many can never be recorded on account of the secrecy which often accompanied the service. However unless the universe is a hollow mockery, and love, truth and justice mere figments of human imagination, all these good works must be recorded elsewhere. In the Book of Life are many things not recorded by human authors. In paying our tribute to the memory of this benefactor of our Church we might remind ourselves of our duty to be worthy of the great heritage which is ours.

> " *We are the heirs* " said Sir John Campbell in 1905, " *of men who in divers times and in different phases of religious thought, lived and worked and preached and fought and died for liberty of conscience. Let us, in God's name, prove ourselves worthy of our heritage.*"

Our great friend and benefactor has now joined those who " lived and worked and preached and fought " for liberty of conscience and the exercise of private judgement in religion. May we who are the heirs be worthy of our great trust.

Pulpits, Filled and Vacant.

It is good to know that during the last few weeks two of our vacant pulpits have been filled. Accounts of two Ordination services will be found in this issue. We congratulate the Moneyrea congregation on the settlement of their new minister, the Rev. Dare Davies. Mr. Davies is too well known among us, and among his new flock, to need commendation. Our best wishes are with both congregation and minister, in the opening of the new chapter in their history. Unfortunately the filling of this pulpit meant the emptying of another in our church. We hope that the congregation at Clough will soon be able to announce that the vacancy has been filled. To the Rev. G. Price-Jones, the newly ordained minister at Crumlin we offer greetings and best wishes for a successful ministry. His brother ministers in Ulster are looking forward to making his closer acquaintance. With regard to our Downpatrick congregation, we are unfortunately still waiting for definite news. It is to be sincerely hoped that there will soon be a settlement. A prolonged vacancy is bad for the church as a whole, for the Presbytery in charge, for the congregation and lastly and most important of all, for the new minister. We trust that our friends at Downpatrick will soon have some good news to announce.

A Service at the Wailing Wall.

In view of recent events in Palestine our readers will no doubt be interested in the Jewish religious service held at the Wailing Wall. The Wall has been standing for centuries and from time immemorial the Jews have gathered there to bewail the destruction of the Temple and to bemoan the lost glory of Israel. The service is by no means a " show " put up to entertain visitors to the Holy City. The earnestness of the outpourings and sorrowful supplications are beyond question. One may well imagine the impressiveness of the following beautiful Litany, chanted in Hebrew.

RABBI : Because of the Palace which is Deserted—

PEOPLE : We sit alone and weep.

RABBI : Because of the Temple which is destroyed,

Because of the walls which are broken down,

Because of our greatness whch is departed,

Because of the precious stones of the Temple ground to powder,

Because of our priests who have erred and gone astray,

Because of our kings who have contemned God—

PEOPLE : We sit alone and weep.

RABBI : We beseech Thee, have mercy on Zion !

PEOPLE : And gather together the Children of Jerusalem.

RABBI : Make speed, make speed, O Deliverer of Zion.

PEOPLE : Speak after the heart of Jerusalem.

RABBI: Let Zion be girded with beauty and majesty.

PEOPLE: Show favour unto Jerusalem.

RABBI: Let Zion find again her kings.

PEOPLE: Comfort those who mourn over Jerusalem.

RABBI: Let peace and joy return to Jerusalem.

PEOPLE: Let the branch of Jersualem put forth the bud.

Visit of Mrs. Sydney Martineau.

Members of our Church are urged to keep in mind the forthcoming visit of Mrs. Sydney Martineau, the President of the General Assembly. If Mrs. Martineau were as well known in the North of Ireland as she is in England there would be no need to ask for good attendances at the meetings. For many years she has faithfully served the cause of Liberal Christianity in England, exactly how well may be judged from the fact that she was chosen to be the first President of the newly-constituted General Assembly, the highest honour in the Liberal Christian body. We are particularly fortunate in having a visit from Mrs. Martineau and it is hoped that the meetings will be well attended.

There will be a meeting in The Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Belfast, in the evening of Thursday, Oct. 3rd under the auspices of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland and a meeting in the same building on the following afternoon, October 4th, in connection with the Women's League. The times, together with full details, will be announced later.

NOTICE TO MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES.

A new feature of the magazine, commencing with the next issue, will be an Irish Non-Subscribing Church Calendar giving particulars of the services held each Sunday in all our places of worship.

Will the minister or secretary of each congregation please send in to the Editor not later than Thursday, 17th September, the following details —

(*a*) *Full name and place of Church.*
(*b*) *Full name of Minister.*
(*c*) *Times of Services.*

The usefulness of such a calendar to our own people and to visitors, will be obvious.

Will ministers and secretaries please give this matter immediate attention so that the list may be complete? We are anxious that not one congregation should be omitted.

Prayer:

A MORNING PRAYER FOR LIFE AND POWER AND LOVE.

BY M. DEARMER.

Thou knowest, O Heavenly Father, the duties that lie before me this day, the dangers that may confront me, the sins that must beset me. Guide me, strengthen me, protect me. Give me Thy life in such abundance that I may this day hold my soul in Thy pure light. Give me Thy power that I may become a power for righteousness among my fellows. Give me Thy love, that all lesser things may have no attraction for me; that selfishness, impurity and falseness may drop away as dead desires, holding no meaning for me. Let me find Thy power, Thy love, Thy life in all mankind and in the secret places of my own soul.—AMEN.

Reading:

IN THE ABSOLUTE LOVE ALONE SHALL WE FIND REST.

BY S. A. BROOKE.

True being is union with the unchangeable, the infinite, the imperishable; with the all-creating, all-possessing Love whom we call God, and who, because He is absolute Love, is also absolute Life. How shall we creatures of a day attain this wondrous end? We attain it by loving, by losing ourselves in love, by claiming our indestructible union with the eternal love within us, and living that love with act and speech among our brother-spirits here or elsewhere. That is to know God, to be His child, to live in Him. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. And that is why Christ Jesus said: "He that drinketh of these waters (of all the waters Nature or humanity give us) shall thirst again; but the water that I shall give him (the water of God's being, unison with the absolute Love) shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." There alone is satisfaction for us, children of the Infinite—in the union of our little fire of love with the eternal glow, we unite ourselves to Nature, by science, by art, by feeling: it is well we unite ourselves to humanity: it is well, but in the absolute love alone shall we find our rest.

Ordination Services.

CRUMLIN INSTALLATION.

The pulpit at Crumlin, rendered vacant by the removal of the Rev. S. Evans Bowen, to Cardiganshire, was filled on Wednesday, 28th August by the ordination of the Rev. G. Price-Jones by the Presbytery of Templepatrick. The service followed the prescribed order. The Rev. Felix Holt, B.A., of Ballymoney preached the sermon, Rev. Alfred Turner gave the exposition of Presbyterian Church Government, Rev. Joseph Miskimmin as Moderator put the usual questions, which were satisfactorily answered by the candidate. The solemn ceremony of Ordination by the laying on of hands then took place, Rev. Eustace Thompson offering prayer. Mr. Thompson then gave the right hand of followship and the welcome into the Non-Subscribing Church. The charges to the minister and to the congregation were then delivered by the Revs. W. G. Marsden and John McCleery respectively.

The Rev. G. Price-Jones has been a student of the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, and of Manchester College, Oxford. We had heard that the Crumlin Congregation was small, but were agreeably surprised at the numbers who turned up for the Ordination, despite the bad weather and the usual difficulties attending a mid-week service. The Congregation's quiet enthusiasm and ability to do things was later shown by the way in which the visitors were entertained in the Orange Hall at the close of the service. The impression we carried away was that, though the congregation at Crumlin may not be large, there is every hope that by quiet work and faithfulness it will continue to be, as in the past, a vigorous centre of Liberal Religion in the district.

MONEYREA INSTALLATION.

The Rev. J. Dare Davies, of Clough, was installed on Tuesday, July 30th, at 3 p.m., to the pastorate of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Moneyrea, by the Bangor Presbytery in the presence of a large congregation. The Rev. P. Godding conducted the service and preached the sermon, while the Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A., gave an exposition of Presbyterian Church Government enumerating salient points in the code of Discipline and especially emphasising the equal rights of ministers and lay representatives in the Church Courts. The Rev. John Barron put the prescribed questions to Minister and Congregation. These were satisfactorily answered by Mr. Davies and Mr. John Boucher, Secretary of the Congregation. Afterwards the Rev. J. D. Davies, made a statement of his principles and objects in devoting himself to the Christian ministry. This was followed by the Installation Prayer when the Rev. Alfred Davison officiated, who afterwards offered the right hand of fellowship and welcomed Mr. Davies into the Bangor Presbytery, followed by Presbyters and other ministers present. The Charge to the Minister and Congregation was in the hands of the Rev. G. J. Slipper, a former minister of the Congregation. The singing of the closing hymn and the pronouncing of the benediction by the Rev. J. D. Davies brought an inspiring service to a close. A cordial invitation to those present at the Installation, to a luncheon in the Lyttle Memorial Schools, was accepted by the numerous gathering when the new minister was welcomed.

The New Minister Welcomed.

The Rev. D. J. Williams, Clerk of Bangor Presbytery, presided at the sumptuous luncheon provided by the kind hospitality of the Moneyrea Congregation. The health of His Majesty having been toasted and the Governor and Government of Northern Ireland honoured, the Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., looking exceptionally well after his recegt trying illness, in a racy speech brimful of good feeling did ample justice to the sentiment of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, to which the Clerk of Synod, Rev. G. J. Slipper, responded in fitting terms. The Rev T. J. Magill, B.A., in exhilarating mood with much animation testified to the worth of the new minister and proposed his health and prosperity to which the Rev. J. D. Davies heartily responded, though in somewhat more subdued and grave though cordial terms. The Rev. John Barron in an appreciative speech, proposed the other Presbyteries, including those in the North of Ireland and the Synod of Munster. The Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A., responded in his usual kindly, friendly spirit in a delightfully humorous speech. The Secretary of Clough Congregation spoke of the value of Mr. Davies as minister of Clough, and the universal esteem in which he was held by

the Congregation. The Chairman gave the sentiment : "Other Denominations" and cordially welcomed three representatives of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Mr. M'Larnon, of Ballygowan, and Rev. Mr. Anderson, of Granshaw, both testified that the service of that day had interested them greatly and were pleased to find no "slating" of other churches. Dr. Henry, of Comber, also spoke as a layman and took a line of his own and urged members of Protestant Churches to be true to their places of worship, to attend regularly and to support the ministry to the utmost extent of their power.

We congratulate Rev. J. D. Davies and the Moneyrea Congregation on the success of the Installation and the subsequent welcome to the ministry in Moneyrea.

Obituaries.

Sir John Campbell.

Address at the Funeral Service conducted by the Rev. Alfred Turner, in the Non-Subscribing Church, Templepatrick, Monday, September 2nd, 1929.

It is extremely difficult for me to address even a few brief words to you touching our departed friend John Campbell. The subject is too big for me ; too big for my poor and inadequate words. Besides that, he was my friend ; and now that he has passed beyond the Veil to learn more of the great secret of life which he often pondered, one could wish to sit with the mourners and listen to, rather than try to express, a word of comfort, of hope, of the human need for trust in the abiding goodness of our Heavenly Father. For though the death of our departed friend was not unexpected it is nevertheless fraught with exceeding great sadness, for the evening of his life when he might have looked for rest after the day of toil was done, has been eliminated ; and he has been withdrawn from his family circle and from the larger circle of his friends at an age when humanly thinking and speaking, more years might have been added to those achieved. It is not for us to complain but to trust and believe that the dispensations of God are just and righteous altogether ; to acknowledge that his will is the best, and to pray that his will may always be done. And I feel sure that the great good God, our Father in Heaven, will not be angry with us if in our pent-up sorrow at the loss of our friend we express the grief that is in us, and feel acutely the tragedy of the parting.

His remains now on their way to the grave rest for a moment in the place he loved. Here it was that his father and his great-uncle, both named Robert Campbell, ministered for a period of ninety-eight years and the proud consciousness of such service gave to the son and grand-nephew a reverence and a love which grew more and more intense with the lapse of years. The Meeting House in Templepatrick was to him holy ground. The father, Rev. Robert Campbell, was an exceptional man—an excellent preacher, a classical scholar, and a philosopher. With his son Robert (afterwards surgeon to the Royal Victoria Hospital) he read classics ; and with his son John he read half way through his medical course. But this father of whom I am speaking, was concerned not only for mental equipment and the acquisition of skill—he was concerned for the realisation of an ideal of conduct and character. Such an ideal he set up ; explained it to his sons ; taught them the surest methods of approach ; and so made it clear that they never forgot his instruction, nor never deviated therefrom. Those two boys owed much to their father.

John spent his early boyhood's days in this district. He entered into its life with that same zest and thoroughness which characterised his work and play throughout his life. He mixed with all classes and creeds and knew them all better than they knew themselves. In after years when he settled among us for a time in Castle Upton, he came knowing the people intimately and always ready to supply them with biographical detail relative to their families. And also I may say in passing that frequently he supplied them with surgical skill for which many poor women in these parts have reason to bless the memory of John Campbell.

The time came for him, as for all boys, when the irresponsibilities of youth must be placed aside, and more serious aspects of life regarded. He left the Roughfort village school and entered upon the larger work of intermediate education for the most part in the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. From thence he passed to the University and there again in consequence of hard work, thoroughness, unwearied perseverance he reached the highest places until Universities and Colleges of Surgeons had no higher distinctions left to confer

upon him. Our friend stood out among men remarkable alike for his achievement and his skill. The poorest benefited at his hand and his name was of world-wide repute.

How shall I presume to speak to you of such a man! And yet I would like to tell you that in past years I have acted as his agent in the dispensation of his generosity when he did not wish his left hand to know what his right hand was doing. He was strangely shy of publicity in these things.

There was a tenderness in him, a feeling for others in suffering which he kept as much as possible out of sight. I knew of it, and knew that it could be counted upon. We sat alone one night and compared notes of our experiences in France. He was there as the highly-skilled surgeon to repair so far as he could the ravages of war on the human body. He settled to his work with his usual determination and thoroughness. He dealt with his "cases." But one could see that his heart bled for the young fellows whose bodies had been broken to bits and which he tried to piece together again. To hear him denounce war as an insane method of settling international disputes was to know that he keenly suffered with those poor broken fellows who came under his kindly and skilful treatment at Wimereaux.

We are about to place the remains of our friend in the grave. If tempted to ask ourselves is this then the end of it all? To work, to struggle, to hope, to achieve, to love, and then down to the darkness of the grave? The poet helps us to express our feeling:—

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him: Thou art just."

"My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is."

In our time of sorrow, of bereavement, we are surely to be forgiven if for the moment we stagger beneath the blow, and shock overtakes our faith. Thank God, it is a temporary experience. Light comes with the dawn of a new day and we begin to see clearly again that the grave has not won the victory. As we ponder the words the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ we begin again to feel that with the help of His grace we may step with him into the life everlasting. May God grant to us His blessing. We pray that the calm and comfort of His Holy Spirit may rest upon the bereaved widow and her children and the other members of the family, and bring them into the peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

Mr. Wm. M'Giffen.

On Tuesday the 21st July, the Rev. W. G. Marsden (pastor loci), speaking of the demise of Mr. Wm. M'Giffen, said: On Thursday last there was laid to rest the mortal remains of one well known to every member of our church and who for years before my coming here as minister was Secretary of the Congregation. Our esteemed friend Mr. William M'Giffen, was of advanced age, beyond the allotted span of 3 score and 10 years of the psalmist and therefore we cannot be surprised at his passing from our midst, or grieved that so peacefully and calmly he has entered into his rest. Could we speak to him now we should not hesitate, I hope, to congratulate him that the fight was over and that he had finished his earthly course.

Peace to his memory. I have known Mr. Wm. M'Giffen fairly intimately for many years. He was about to resign his school at Windy Gap when I first came among you and most of us know how cheerful and breezy and genial a man he was at all times, for he was blessed with splendid health and strength throughout his long life. Then after his first sickness two years ago his life was pleasant, seeing old friends and reading the magazines and books of the day. But that is not all, his life was a useful one to many. There must be a considerable number of persons who would readily acknowledge how highly and even affectionately they think of him, as they remember their early school years, for as a teacher of the practical subjects he was unsurpassed.

A very happy life was his, teaching the young useful knowledge to equip them for their work in the world, and well disposed he was to all, always a friend and helper to every one and never seeking to dominate others. Unselfish he was and kind and considerate to all, and now he has gone home and we all think kindly of him and say peace to his memory.

Letters to the Editor.

[Letters to the Editor are welcomed. They should be written in good taste, as brief as possible and duly authenticated. No letter will be inserted without the writer's name].

SIR,

In our brief but pleasant interview and conversation here as well as by what I read in the newspapers I came to regard you as the successor not immediate of Rev. John Porter, minister of what in the olden times was called the "Second House" now called "All Souls'." The Congregation was I think, the largest of our whole Church, the members genial and friendly with each other and especially to outsiders who occasionally worshipped with them as I did in my student days.

Mr. Porter was a strong upholder of the Presbytery of Antrim and the various institutions of our Church. With respect to the latter a change came with the advent of the Rev. J. C. Street, who made known his intentions to revolutionise our various institutions and replace or arrange them otherwise. He made this intention known to one of my dearest friends, Mr. Robert Millar who, when his education was completed, was assisting in Missionary work in London, and had become imbued more or less with the eccentricities of English Unitarianism. I need not say that Mr. Street was as good as his word and our Church became convulsed from stem to stern with controversy and worse, and how Mr. Street acknowledged to me that his policy was a failure.

But my pleasant hopes and anticipations with regard to you were dashed when I noted your editorial in the NON-SUBSCRIBER, advocating a huge upheaval—our entire organisation to be scrapped, and new organisations established. One Central Fund to be administered by one Central Committee conversant with the needs of each single Church and each individual minister—a large order indeed and Communism undoubtedly. There have been indeed so many organisations formed in connection with our congregations and that it has been said it were well if in the multitude of these the object of our Church be not forgotten that its primary object is the worship of the Almighty. And surely, the Committees of our different organisations ought to know best the requirements of each individual Church and each individual minister.

We read in the New Testament that in the first flush of their enthusiasm the early Christians sold their possessions, and laid the proceeds at the Apostles' feet so that all were helped according to their necessities and worked according to their ability. We know with what result viz.: general poverty, so that St. Paul became a "gentle beggar" to aid the starving Saints of Jerusalem.

I very much regret the amalmagation with "Perfidious Albion" but of this more anon in your October issue if you will give me space and verge enough.

Yours, etc.,

JAS. KENNEDY.

Larne Manse,

August 21st, 1929.

The Scrap Heap.

SIR,

Your vigorous article full of the zeal of youth eager to reform, impatient of restraint suggests thoughts and memories. Dr. Martineau interpreted the persons of the Trinity, as Creative Thought, Guiding Providence, Redeeming Grace, precisely the equivalent of the Hindu Trimurti: Creator Preserver, Destroyer and Regenerator. Let us see visions and dream dreams. An evening sacrifice, the smoke ascending in two great columns and meeting at a great height forming an arch illuminated on its inner side by the great fires from beneath, and gigantic shadows of men at work round those fires cast upon the arch of smoke and on the clouds. Here is the domain of Destroyer and Regenerator. The air is heated and sulphurous, and round about are the scrap heaps with everything from rusty cans to obsolte steam engines. Turn to the dazzling light of furnace from which great blocks of white-hot metal are dragged on lorries, to revolving rollers from which they issue like writhing burning snakes.

The Hindu speaks of the Trimurti as standing on a burning ground, and such a graven image is with me now, the three persons standing where flames form over them a canopy of glory, a glory blinding by its excess of light, the clouds and darkness round about His pavilion, for the Lord our God is a consuming fire.

He is fire because He is Life. The Life that maketh all things new.

There is the melting-pot of discipleship. "Gold in the crucible is he, who stands the melting heat of trial." Outworn ideas and habits are all consumed there. Time is a consuming fire, and the Day shall declare what every man's work is.

Religions, temples, hoary institutions, cults, priesthoods, ministries, churches, must all come to the scrap heap, must pass through the regenerating fires.

But, all in good time! Evolution will provide for all that, there's no need to hurry evolution, and an imperfect form to which a person or a church is accustomed and which with hearty good-will can be used effectively is better than a brand new system, which like a tool to which a workman is unaccustomed, produces work not so good.

Our present system may have its faults, but, as it stands it is the outcome of long experience and deliberation and works well enough. The ultimate aim may be to weld it with the English Assembly, which God forbid! Enough of bungling, tyrannical, materialistic methods crushing out idealism and spirituality. Keep such away, let not such sacrilege come near this "Gem of the sea, this Emerald Isle," where seen and unseen blend, where religion remains strong and love-light shines in eyes of old and young.

JOHN BARRON.

SIR,—

I have read with approval Mr. Begg's letter in your last issue on our Church Organisation but I cannot agree with your Editorial in which you suggest scrapping the lot including some of our Statements of Belief.

The Statement which stands at the head of our Constitution is that the Scriptures are the Rule of Christian Faith and Duty under the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. The emphasis is on the word "under." The only interpretation of that basis is that the teaching of Christ is our Rule of Faith and that alone. That is the position for which we have stood during all the years of our existence set clearly forth. An orthodox and Modernist Professor has described it as an ideal basis for the Christian Church of the future. When we depart from that position we cut ourselves off from all our past. We renounce any claim to be regarded as a part of the Universal Church which to-day we are, whether others think us so or not. We become instead a conglomeration of Theistic Societies if indeed that, and the end will be in sight. Many of our people will drift away. Even those who are most enthusiastic for the Unitarian name call themselves Christian Unitarians and would resent any dropping of the Christian from that title. Some ministers might even prefer the light chains of Modern orthodoxy wherein they might still be ministers of Christ, to salaried lectureships in a group of Societies standing for no one knows what. Happily it is unlikely that our people will wish to change, but even the attempt to change or drop the name Christian will do us great harm in this country.

No one is tied by this statement to a verbal interpretation of the Scriptures. No one is tied to any particular interpretation of the teaching of Christ. Absolute liberty within a distinctly Christian Church is thus assured. One can only conclude that those who object to this Basis object to the Church continuing to be Christian. They have every right to do so but the issue must be made quite plain and if they carry the Church with them then the Community in which we live should be told exactly what the new position is, and our own people and ministers will know where they are. Possibly it might be wise to wait till this question is settled before talking of Organisation. Feeling is strong enough for some of our Congregations to decide to continue as the Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church, a title to which those who scrap the entire organisation and basis will have no claim, and possibly will not wish to claim.

However as things stand our Organisation needs revision. To scrap the Synod and its Presbyteries and put some new Assembly divided into districts etc. in its place would be no great advantage. We should lose moreover all the value in their history and traditions and there is a value in those things, though some think otherwise. The Association should certainly be scrapped. It is after all, the Synod with another Chairman and two congregations added, which congregations take no great interest in its proceedings. Its only business is to receive the reports of two funds. However there is something which can be done at once There is no need to advertise this body in print as large as the Synod. There is no need to open it with

great formality and pressmen in attendance. The Association could exist for ever and no confusion be caused to anyone if it were simply given small type at the back of our reports and minutes when printed, and if its meetings were held without formality Until it is abolished this might be done. I would however make an entirely new suggestion. Let us abolish the Unitarian Christian Association and the Laymen's League which appeal to only a section of our people and let the Association become a real Association of Non-Subscribing people open to all at a small subscription. The business of government could then be left to the Synod while all propaganda and Missionary work and everything of that kind could be left to the Association. Make it as though it had been an Asssociation started by the people to "get a move on." The Synod is confined to ministers and elders. There is no satisfactory outlet for the energy of the rank and file. In this way the Association might become the means of a revival in our midst. No Non-Subscriber could object to joining an Association of Non-Subscribing people. Funds might be raised and good work done and a great rally held say twice a year in the Ulster Hall.

The Remonstrant Synod can be scrapped when someone can persuade it to share its Sustentation Fund with the other Churches Certainly the Remonstrant Synod and the Presbytery of Antrim should give up the right to issue Special Licences of Marriage. It is absurd that the Moderators of these Bodies should have a right which the moderator of the Church does not possess. It would involve little sacrifice and it might avoid a great deal of difficulty at times. This is typical of the kind of thing that can be done and done easily to make our Organisation better by evolution instead of revolution. It only wants the will to act. Meanwhile could our Synod not be made more alive than it is. Ministers and Elders are asked to give one day a year to the service of the Church. The attendance should be sixty at least at every Synod. What has been the average attendance in the evening for the past ten years when some of the most important business is transacted ?

Some of us are of the opinion that we might do more by improving things as they are than by any drastic change. What applies to the Synod applies equally to our Congregations. Ministers work till they

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lose heart. Devoted laymen give splendid service. It all comes to little, yet if the majority of our People would simply attend the services of their Church and Subscribe to its upkeep as do the minority, or as do their orthodox neighbours, our strength could be doubled in a year and not only that but a spirit of enthusiasm would arise amongst us, and we should begin to live and prosper. There is a spirit of indifference amongst us that takes the heart out of those who to-day are trying to do something. Scrap that.

Yours etc.,

A. L. AGNEW.

[Once again the Editor appeals to correspondents to be as brief as possible. Those willing to take the thought and trouble demanded by brevity will assist greatly in the editorial work].

The measure of a happy Life is not from the fewer or more Suns we behold, the fewer or more Breaths we draw, or Meals we repeat; but from the having once lived well, acted our Part handsomely, and made our Exit cheerfully, as became us.

—3rd *Earl of Shaftesbury*

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False Gods.

THE RELATIVITY OF IDOLATRY.

BY REV. LESLIE J. BELTON, B.A., M.Sc.

Section IV.

Shall we belabour the "false gods," aud set about us with iconoclastic zeal, or shall we allow to other children of God the "toys" which please them?

This is the problem set forth in M. Brieux's remarkable play, "False Gods." The scene is laid in ancient Egypt, but the problem is no academic one, and applies as pertinently to the living present as to the living past. A young man named Satni, destined for the priesthood, returns from travel in foreign lands. Wider experience has undermined his faith in the gods of his native religion. Isis has no longer any terror for him. He utters treasonable words. Conform to the ancient customs he cannot. Satni typifies the revolt of reason against superstition. "The gods of Egypt exist only because men have invented them.... they are nothing but absurd and lifeless images," "Hear me," cries Satni to the people, "I come to save you from error, to overthrow the idols, to teach you eternal truths." The people listen to his words, but so saturated are they in superstition, so assured that if their own gods exist not, there are other more powerful gods to aid them, that they believe Satni to possess the power of working miracles. He destroys the old gods, therefore he must be in league with other, more potent gods. "No," exclaims Satni, "I have no God. If there be a god, he is so great, so far from us, so utterly beyond our comprehension, that for us it is as though he did not exist. To believe that one of our actions.....could act upon the will of God is to belittle him, to deny Him." God is incapable of miracle, but the people understand not. True, some of them smash their household idols, but the idols of their mind still remain. The gods had promised them through the words of their priests, a good time in the world to come. If the gods exist not and the priests utter lies, then they will have their good time now, and some of them begin to plunder and destroy. Satni preaches to them in vain. Follow virtue for its own sake they cannot. The only gods they know are visible idols whose behests are mediated by the priests; their

only moral sanctions the commands of priests who are content to threaten punishment and promise reward.

I cannot describe the play in its entirety, but let me repeat the words of the poor blind woman who laments for the faith she has torn from her heart at Satni's behest. She had felt ashamed to have been fooled by such priestly make-believes, but now her soul is as a house after burning "black, ruined, empty." She cries aloud for consolation, for some lie to believe in, if only it will bring her peace. So in her heart she sets up again the images she had spurned. "They have awakened my reason and killed my faith. I shall kill my reason, to revive our gods. Though I no longer believe, I shall do the actions of believers—and if my god be false, I shall believe so firmly in him, that I shall make him true..... The ugliest....the most unreal of our gods, I adore them, and I bow down before their impossibility." Poor Satni! This then is the harvest he reaps for sowing seeds of truth in fields choked with the weeds of inherited superstition.

Section V.

Shall we smash the idols? Which is the better course: to allow men to hold fast to their illusions, to retain their "false gods," or to destroy them? True, men relinquish not easily that which is endeared to them. One may seek to destroy and fail. But is it wise to destroy at all? By destroying faith in an illusion, by demonstrating the falsity of a dearly-loved idol, may not many an erstwhile devotee be plunged into utter despair? That may sometimes happen. Yet the mind of man has its own defences and compensations, its own sovereign balm. If we destroy not, then we countenance evil and falsehood, or so it seems.

Brieux, in his play, seeks to convey the truth (if I interpret him rightly) that a false doctrine or a superstitious practice is not disposed of when its real nature is demonstrated. Most people desire not truth at all costs, but comfort of mind. Unsettlement, like suspension of judgment, is for most people a painful experience. Furthermore, it is probable that, if one falsehood be taken away, another will be created; that if the old idols be smashed, new ones will be erected in their stead. In very truth, men get the gods they deserve and the gods they understand.

Man is innately, perhaps incurably credulous. He swallows the camels of ancient dogma if not with relish certainly with ease, and for no better reason than that others before him and others around him swallow them. By making a virtue of faith, he seeks to cloak his native credulity and to disguise, the irrationality of his beliefs. Superstition is not confined to Ancient Egypt or modern India or Africa, the Christianity of the Churches is ridden with inherited superstitions, and many modern cults exhibit them in a new guise. False gods are almost as numerous to-day as even they were in the Pantheon of old. Belief in the Bible as the infallible Word of God is a "false god," and there are others in almost every field of human activity not excepting the Churches of the Unitarian and Presbyterian order.

Section VI.

What then is the solution of this problem? Are we to destroy the false gods, are we to smash the idols? First of all, we need to remember that, in the school of life, there are children of different ages and of varying capacity to learn. No man in his senses would preach modernist Unitarianism to the Zulu tribes. If he did so, he would find his gospel twisted out of all recognition in a few years. One adopts one method in teaching young children, another method in teaching adults. Clearly, religion and education are closely allied. We need to realise that the younger scholar needs certain aids with which the elder scholar can dispense; he needs his picture books, his idols, if you will. Wantonly to destroy those representations of truth dear to him is to be guilty of criminal folly. How then shall we proceed? There is one way only. Destroy not his idols, but seek to enlarge and ennoble his ideas. Show him a better way. Take not his leading strings from him, but show him how he may walk without them. Give new meanings to old terms. Reveal to him purer, sublimer symbols of Truth. Then the time may come when, of his own accord, he will escape from the thraldom of "false gods" and destroy them of his own free will, then will he learn that reason and faith are not opposites but allies.

Nevertheless, there is work in the world for the reformer, even for the smasher of idols. Amos was not too kind in his day to the priests of the old order. The passing of a beloved falsehood is attended with pain but the infliction of temporary suffering and

the loss of mental comfort are usually inevitable. What convert to Religious Liberalism is there who remembers not the painful storm and stress of his pilgrimage towards " the wide horizon's grander view "? Still there are captives imprisoned in bigotry and falsehood. They must be shown the way to freedom.

One class of people only shall we consistently oppose : those who thrust at us as final, gospel Truth, their own partial pictures of Reality, who cry aloud in the market place that they alone know the truth, and possess the keys of heaven. The idols of the hot-gospeller we shall not hesitate to destroy. There is a limit even to toleration when self-preservation is at stake.

All the while we shall seek to preserve humility. No man and no school can capture Truth. We see through mirrors darkly. No image of ours is complete, no symbol represents finality. The absolute for ever escapes us, yet attracts us on and on. The ground of all values—He who fathers, universally, eternally, our divine humanity, how shall we picture Him ? Nay, we cannot, " for He is Himself the great One above all His works.....Exhalt Him as much as ye can ; for even yet will He exceed : and when ye exhalt Him, put forth your full strength : be not weary ; for ye wlil never attain."—(Ecclesiasticus 28 : 13 and 30.)

Reports.

ALL SOULS' GIFT TO NEW MUSEUM.

One of the exhibits in the new Belfast Museum and Art Gallery is an old lead spout-head presented by the Church. It is housed in the Belfast Room, labelled as follows :—

" Lead Spout-head. Dated 1789. From the Second Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, re-built in 1789. Taken down when congregation removed to All Souls' Church in 1896.

Donors : Trustees, All Souls' Church."

It is fitting that this relic should find a permanent home in the New Museum. It provides an outward and visible sign of the close connection between the Second Congregation and the past history of Belfast.—

FROM THE ALL SOULS' SEPTEMBER CALENDAR.

Ballycarry.—Under the auspices of the Ballycarry Branch of the Women's League a very successful afternoon sale was held on the last Saturday in May. At the informal opening, Miss Jackson of Leeds very kindly addressed the gathering. There was a large number of our friends from Ballyclare accompanied by the Rev. A. M. Bell, and also a contingent of friends from Larne with the Rev. and Mrs. Begg. During the Sale musical and variety items were rendered of a charming character ; there were songs by Mrs. James Drummond and Miss Lang, recitations by Master Ivan Nelson, the Misses Sloan and Master Leslie Girvan, and clever character and natural dances by Master and Miss Steel. The annual sermon to children was preached on the 1st Sunday in July, by the Rev. John Begg of Larne. The occasion was marked by the attendance of the Ballycarry Boy Scouts and Cubs and Girl Guides, accompanied by their Scoutmaster and Leaders. Mr Begg delivered a most appropriate and interesting address. The Church was well filled, special hymns were sung by the children's choir. Regarding the Annual Excursion of the Sunday school, the place chosen for our visit this year was Holywood. A party of about sixty proceeded by motor bus and upon arrival were met by the Rev. Edgar Lockett who very kindly extended a very friendly welcome to all. After tea the party proceeded to the shore and spent a very pleasant time, they again adjourned to the school-room as it was found that a second repast was required. Thanks are due to our friends at Holywood for their very kindly welcome which was much appreciated.

Ballyhemlin.— The Annual Excursion took place on Friday July 26th. This year the place selected was Larne. Two large cars were engaged, and the halting places on the outgoing and return journeys were Belfast, Carrickfergus, Bangor. The day was a very happy one, and everybody was well pleased.

First Church, Belfast.— Unveiling of Memorial Window. In pious memory of Isabella Riddel and Eliza Riddel, whose name still liveth in Belfast by reason of their philanthropic and charitable works, the Duffin family have decided to erect a Window in the First Church where they worshipped during their lifetime and found

the inspiration to good deeds. The Committee of the Congregation gratefully accepted the suggestion, and fixed the Unveiling Ceremony for Sunday, 29th September at Morning Service. The Window will be unveiled and the preacher on the occasion will be the Rev. H. J. Rossington, whose ministry the Misses Riddel attended during his 20 years in Belfast and who was their intimate friend. The work is being carried out by Messrs. Ward and Partners, of Belfast and appropriately the centre figure will represent "Charity." A cordial invitation to the Ceremony is extended to menbers of the church and to all friends of those commemorated.—From the September Calendar.

Glenarm.—Under the auspices of Masonic Lodge No. 45 Glenarm, a special service was held in the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, on Sunday, 11th August, at 4 p.m. In addition to the local brethren, there was a large attendance of members of the Order from Larne, Ballymena, and other centres. Wearing regalia the brethren marched in processional order from Lord Antrim's demesne to the Meeting House where they were accommodated with seats on the ground floor. The gallery was taxed to its utmost capacity with those not belonging to the Order. The first part of the service was taken by W. Br. Rev. T. P. Waring, P.G.C., Antrim. The preacher was W. Br. Rev. A. Turner, Templepatrick, who took for his text Matthew V. 22. In the course of an interesting discourse, the speaker reviewed the history of the country and contrasted the unfair conditions under which young people and others laboured a hundred years ago with the improved conditions that have since taken place in almost every walk in life. By exemplifying in their lives the great principles of goodwill, of brotherliness, of Charity, they could not fail to exert an influence for good over the lives of those whom they met in daily intercourse. The collection realised £23 19s. 9d. £21 6s. 9d. being devoted to Masonic Charities, the balance to Glenarm Nursing Society. The hymns were well rendered by the choir, Miss Eva McMullan presided at the organ. The service concluded with the Benediction and the singing of the National Anthem.

York Street.—As a result of the Bazaar which was held on the Minister's return a sum of £215 has been wiped off the Church debt. Attendances have become normal again after the holidays and the Church is now full on Sunday evenings as in former days. In order that we may not have to turn people away during the winter, work has at last been commenced on the gallery. About half the estimated sum of £300 which will be required is in hand. On Sunday, August 25th, about a hundred members travelled to Raloo. The Church there was crowded. Rev. John McCleery preached. After tea in the Manse grounds we returned to Belfast the line of 'buses halting en route at Glenoe while the minister laid a wreath on the grave of Mrs.M'Calmond, "Grannie," who was scarcely ever absent from her place in York Street till she died during Mr. Agnew's absence in Switzerland. She was with us on our last trip to Raloo. In the evening our Meeting House being in the hands of the Builders some seventy of our people attended the service in the First House. Unfortunately our late return prevented most of those who had been away in the morning from going with them. The after meeting was held as usual in York Street. Work by our own members is still going on in the evenings. The Anniversary Service will be held in the Ulster Hall on Sunday 29th September at 7 p.m. We hope that country ministers and friends who can be present without interfering with their own Services will help us as before. Tea will be served in York Street from 4 p.m. till 11 p.m. Cars and 'buses can be parked in front of the Church. Parties from the country should arrange to be at the Hall at 6-30.

Cocktails.

Great astronomers, chemists, mathematicians, physicists, philosophers, explorers, discoverers, teachers, preachers, sociologists, and saints may be so poor that their wives are worn out in a constant struggle to keep up appearances and make both ends meet ; but the business organisers pile up millions on millions, whilst their unfortunate daughters carry about diamond; and sables to advertise their parents' riches, and drink cocktails until they feel so bad inside that they pay large sums to surgeons to cut them open and find out what is the matter with them.

G. Bernard Shaw.

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